3: Wagley E-5 (1939-1953) 1955
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with so few people holding the status positions of aboriginal Tapirapé society much specialised knowledge will be lost. This is true of shamanism, as explained above, and it is true of the weaving of baskets for which Tapirapé men were justly famous before 1940. In 1953, only two men of the tribe knew the art of basket making. In aboriginal times, it was a technique which men learned after adolescence (Tapirapé boys were not expected to learn the manly arts), and with the death of so many older men and the disintegration of Tapirapé society, few young men were able to study. Both of the young men who did learn produced baskets which in 1940 would have been considered distinctly inferior and few of the young men in 1953 showed an inclination to learn the art. Like many other aspects of the culture, Tapirapé basketry will probably be a "lost art" within a generation.

Before 1940, one of the striking aspects of Tapirapé culture recorded by both Baldus and myself was the complex set of rules governing food taboos. According to aboriginal Tapirapé culture, women and children are forbidden to eat venison as well as many other specific meats. Nowadays the Tapirapé frequently have beef, which they receive by trade from the Brazilian around the Indian post. As might be suspected, beef is equated with venison and it is taboo to Tapirapé women. Likewise, Tapirapé men who are the fathers of small children may eat neither venison nor beef. One Tapirapé male explained that "Even when we were hungry our women would not eat beef." But in view of their experience with other cultures (i. e., Carajá and Brazilian), such taboos are growing weaker. Hidden from their husbands, several Tapirapé women tested beef for the first time when offered it by the wife of the Indian officer, and several females have taken to eating it (and even venison) at the Indian Post pleading that their secret be kept from their husbands. And one Tapirapé male, the father of an infant, argued while eating venison that the taboo was not a logical one. Food taboos are still kept but

264 462 476 [123] The pots were soon emptied. Then the women and girls came, picked them up, and took them home. The men followed. The Anantxí walked first, with the Vuirantxinió behind them and the Tãnãvé last. They kept this order, and sent me back to the rear when I stepped--not unintentionally--in the midst of the Vuirantxinió.

595 [109] As soon as the village was in sight, things began to move. The men ran straight to the takána and paired up for the dance. The women and girls showed no interest in this and for the most part had already gone to their huts.

The dancing pairs stood in a dense cluster in front of the entrance. In each pair, as was customary, one of the men held his arm across the other's shoulders, while his companion held his arm across the other's hips. Both held a club, bush knife, or bow in the other hand. In the midst of the group stood the leading pair, Tampantxóa and Vuĩraí, the ãntaĩva of the Anantxí. The Anantxí had now mixed with the Vuirantxinió. Of the Tãnãvé, only Kamairahó, Urukumĩ', and I had come. We stayed nearby as onlookers.

First, the men danced for a while on the same spot. As usual, they pawed the ground, all at the same time and always with the same foot, alternating from right to left, keeping their knees slightly bent and the middle part of the body slightly bent forward. Then the leading pair gradually moved away from the spot. They danced with small steps out of the takána. The others followed in the same fashion. They all moved, one pair after the other, slowly, toward the house of Vũãtanamĩ', singing with sounds and shouts rather than words.

When they reached the house of the second leader, the procession broke up. They did not scatter, however, but remained close together. 526 ● 883 [110] The race began. It is called ãhẽũĩ, which means "I run." The adolescents, who were in their initiation year and hence had their faces and bodies completely blackened with genipap, ran two at a time in a straight line across the dance plaza to the back of Kamairahó's house. Actually, there was no spot to be reached first by the winner, and there was no applause from the spectators. It might almost be said that there was no winner. As a rule, indeed, the [154] desire to be singled out or to single out someone is not manifested by these Indians and is probably even regarded by them as a danger to the harmony of the community. These races seemed to be merely runs to be made as fast as possible across the plaza to convince the boys themselves of their own ability. As soon as the two runners reached

Kaniairahó's house, they renewed their mutual holds and smiled graciously at each other (1).

1. In a letter of February 20, 1936, Curt Nimuendajú wrote to me about the Timbira, a Gê tribe: "The Timbira also have a paired race across the village plaza (which is 300 meters in diameter). It is usually held following a more important ceremony. It is called ka-kaĩpda (ka, 'village plaza,' and kaipda, 'across')."

Later, some of the men also took part in the test, even the "old hunter" Kantxovanĩ. When darkness fell, they all went home. Only a dozen pairs had run altogether, for they had started out when the sun had already sunk behind the forest.

[111] On the following afternoon there was another apatxirĩ at a different spot. The participants were so few that there was no dancing or racing. Two days later, a bigger apatxirĩ was held with all the features, this time to the northwest of the village. Thus, apatxirĩ are held on different days and at different places. Not all the men take part. Some work for themselves in their gardens, and others stay home. [Ed., Plates 1-26 are omitted since they concern tribes other than the Tapirapé.]

11: Wagley--3 E-5 (1939-1940) 1945 SP22 Tapirapé SP22

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At the time that follows planting the young man must work in the gardens, and henceforth he will participate in the hunt, thus proving his ability to marry and support a family.